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OROMO LIBERATION FRONT

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PRESS RELEASE
STATEMENT ON THE ETHIOPIAN REGIME'S LAND POLICY IN OROMIA

We express our gravest concern regarding the Tigrean regime's land sale policy in Oromia. The Tigrean led Ethiopian regime has taken its systematic exploitation and deprivation of the resources of Oromia to a new height by putting the land of the Oromo people on the open market for anyone with capital to grab it and use it for any purpose without regulation.

It is with the deepest regret that we reveal that the Ethiopian regime has already sold hundreds of thousands of hectares of fertile agricultural land in Oromia to foreign investors. The regime has put the whole of the state of Oromia on the market.

More than 80 Indian companies have invested an estimated \$4billion in buying huge plantation in Oromia. The largest among them is Karuturi Global, one of the world's largest producers of cut roses. It has signed deals for just under 350,000 hectares to create what it claims to be the world's largest agricultural land-bank.

The King Abdullah initiative for Saudi agricultural investment abroad has also bought vast fertile farmland in Oromia. A group of Saudi investors is spending \$100m to raise wheat, barley and rice on land leased to them by the Ethiopian regime. The investors are exempt from tax and export the entire crop back home.

Sun Biofuels (UK) has acquired 125,000 hectares of land for jatropha farm and is in the process of starting bio fuel production in Oromia and Flora EcoPower (Germany) has bought 13,000 hectares of land and growing jatropha for bio fuel. The list goes on.

In Oromia land belongs to the people. The Oromo people do not only farm the land but have a sacred traditional, spiritual and cultural connection to their land. The Oromo people have been living on their current lands for thousands of years with perfect harmony with nature and they are the best in the region in proper land usage for generations. Now, the Tigrean led regime has condemned the Oromo people to virtual slavery by forcibly uprooting them from the land of their ancestors.

The environmental destruction by the industrial scale farming and exploitation of the natural resource will not only affect Oromia but the whole region.

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Destruction of the ecosystem of Oromia will eliminate the only hope for the whole of the Horn of Africa ever achieving food security all together.

The unregulated extensive chemical use in flower farming and water pollution from the industrial toxic waste products, since the regime introduced free for all policy of land misuse in Oromia, have caused hundreds of deaths and many more people are suffering from ill health.

The regime's land use policy, like everything else, is clearly discriminatory against Oromia state since it is exclusively Oromo urban and rural lands and natural resources that are offered for sale. There is no land selling either in Tigray or Amahara states.

Every nation has its unique cultural and historical values. The Oromo people value their connection to their ancestral homeland. Landlessness is the lasting thing that the Oromo people will accept laying down. The current displacement of the Oromo people from their ancestral land in the guise of land for investors will no doubt lead to a bloodbath. The investors are ill advised to ignore the economic and political consequences of their action.

Oromia is a nation under a colonial rule. The Oromo people are engaged in struggle for independence. Foreign companies and governments involved in land trade with the Ethiopian regime need to be aware that the regime is selling to them someone else's property. It is also immoral to usurp land from subjugated people. The question of food sovereignty is profound and the people will inevitably take the matter into their own hands. We would like to remind the so called investors to take a long view of the situation from economic and ethical perspective and refrain from participating in genocide acts.

The Tigrean dominated ruling despots sell everything in Oromia including farmland, forests, mineral deposits and urban land to the highest bidder to line their own pockets. The regime has absolute control over all aspects of the life of the Oromo people through total domination by its ruthless security forces at all level of the society. The regime has over a million paid spies in Oromia who torture innocent Oromo public.

The Oromo people not only battle for survival against lack of security and protection but also ominous poverty, manmade famine, preventable diseases, and untold economic exploitation never seen before. The Tigrean led Ethiopian regime is conducting not simply human rights abuse but acts of genocide against the Oromo people.

The regime only understands force. The OLF will do all in its power not only to reverse the acts of illegal misappropriation of land in Oromia but also to end the occupation of Oromia by alien forces by all means necessary. At this crucial juncture we call upon the entire Oromo people to defend themselves against the threat to their survival by any means available to them.

Oromia shall be free!

Oromo Liberation Front